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Message Text

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46
ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00

XMB-02 CIEP-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 /032 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/ARN:MHMAUGHAN:DPW
APPROVED BY NEA/ARN:MDRAPER
---------- 106752
R 120130Z MAR 76
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, CASC, US, IZ

SUBJECT: VISIT OF JOSEPH BOUCAI

1. EMBASSY CAN EXPECT VISIT WITHIN NEXT MONTH FROM JOSEPH BOUCAI, A FORMER SYRIAN JEW (NOW U.S. CITIZEN) WHO PLANS TO VISIT DAMASCUS TO ESTABLISH CONTACTS AMONG JEWISH MERCHANTS AND OTHERS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF NEW EXPORT/IMPORT OPERATION WITH U.S. FIRMS. HE THINKS TIME IS RIPE, SINCE SYRIAN JEWISH BUSINESSMEN MAY BE HAVING EASIER TIME ACQUIRING IMPORT LICENSES. BOUCAI ALSO PLANS TO CHECK NEED OF JEWISH COMMUNITY THERE FOR EDUCATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS ARTICLES WITH IDEA OF RETURNING AND CONTACTING U.S. JEWISH GROUPS WHO WISH TO MAKE CONTRIBUTIONS IN THIS AREA.

2. BOUCAI HAS DISCUSSED HIS COMMERCIAL PLANS, WHICH INCLUDE POSSIBLE PARTICIPATION IN DAMASCUS FAIR AND EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE JEWISH TOURISM TO SYRIA, WITH USDOC AND SYRIAN AMBASSADOR KABBANI, AS WELL AS WITH DEPARTMENT.

3. BOUCAI'S WIFE IS CONCERNED THAT BECAUSE HER HUSBAND ORIGINALLY LEFT SYRIA ILLEGALLY AND LIVED FOR SOME YEARS IN
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ISRAEL, THERE MAY BE PROBLEMS IF HE EXTENDS HIS STAY IN

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SYRIA BEYOND 15 DAYS, AS IS LIKELY, AND MUST APPLY FOR EXIT VISA TO LEAVE COUNTRY. WIFE, WHO IS NOT SYRIAN JEW, ACCOM-

PANIED HER HUSBAND ON PREVIOUS VISIT, BUT WILL NOT BE WITH HIM ON THIS TRIP. SHE FEELS SHE HELPS KEEP HIM OUT OF TROUBLE.

4. BASED ON EMBASSY'S PAST REPORTING, WE PRESUME BOUCHAI WOULD HAVE NO PROBLEMS (E.G., EXIT VISAS, ETC.) OTHER THAN WHAT HIS EXTRAORDINARY GARRULITY MIGHT BRING HIM; HOWEVER, WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR VIEWS AND INFO RE EXIT VISA REQUIRE-MENTS. KISSINGER

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